

# EXHIBIT 74

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# Five new Rikers Island jail wardens meant to bring in outside ideas — but three have years of NYC Correction Dept. work history



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PUBLISHED: April 26, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. | UPDATED: April 26, 2023 at 9:30 p.m.

At a federal court hearing Thursday in a case involving violence at Rikers Island, the Correction Department is expected to tout the hiring of five civilian wardens in an effort to bring an infusion of new, outside ideas to the agency.

But three of the hires now known as “assistant commissioners” are to varying extents insiders, having already worked for the Correction Department, two of them for a combined 55 years. One was suspended on charges of doing nothing while a mentally ill detainee bashed his head repeatedly against a wall.

“I know that their impressive credentials, their professionalism, and expertise will help us to continue to move this agency forward,” Correction Commissioner Louis Molina said in a statement.

Newly-minted warden Antoinette Cort was [suspended from her supervisory job in February 2021](#) over the incident in which a detainee repeatedly bashed his head against a jail wall. Cort was charged during the de Blasio era, but in late 2022, Molina dismissed the disciplinary case against her.

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D.O.C Commissioner Louis Molina.

Cort has been with Correction Department for 25 years and won a series of awards for her work in the jails, the department said. "I am grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve this agency and to help turn it around," Cort said in a news release.

Two other of the new wardens have sued the Correction Department on either racial discrimination or sexual harassment grounds — cases that ended in settlements totaling \$520,000.

One of those new wardens, Charles Williams, spent 30 years working for law enforcement, including the federal prison in Ray Brook, N.Y., and agencies in South Carolina, Florida, Kansas. His most recent stop was the Alabama Department of Correction.

He was hired by the city Correction Department in 2016 in an administrative role, but claimed he was forced out under then-Commissioner Cynthia Brann in 2018 and then filed a lawsuit alleging the mostly white leadership of the agency was racist and discriminated against him, court records show.

Williams wrote in a resignation letter he left "solely because of the hostile work environment, discrimination and retaliation," said his lawyer Rocco Avallone in a hearing on the case.



At a federal court hearing Thursday in the case involving violence at Rikers Island, the Correction Department is expected to tout the hiring of five civilian wardens which were supposed to bring an infusion of new ideas from outside the agency.

"He was marginalized, transferred to Rikers Island to work out of a trailer as opposed to being in a nice, you know, luxurious office space that a lot of the white executive officers were allowed to maintain who had less experience than him," Avallone alleged.

Williams was awarded a \$95,000 settlement, records show.

The other new warden who won a settlement, Sonya Harvey, has worked for the Correction Department for over 30 years. She also has won awards for her work — and sued the department twice on sexual harassment grounds.

Harvey, as an assistant deputy warden, sued the department in 2012 alleging a superior harassed her for five years and even masturbated in front of her. She [sued again in May 2018 alleging two other superiors sexually harassed her](#), The News previously reported.

The first lawsuit was settled in 2016 for \$425,000, records show.

In the second case, she claimed, a captain told her: "You like nuts in your mouth? How would you like my nuts in your mouth," the second lawsuit filed in Manhattan Supreme Court alleged. The captain later pleaded guilty to harassment, The News reported. The lawsuit is pending.

In a previous interview with The News, Harvey described the Correction Department as a "good old boys club."



New appointee Sonya Harvey, pictured, has worked for DOC for over 30 years. She also has won awards for her work. She also sued DOC twice on sexual harassment grounds.

One of the other appointees, Danielle Davis, worked for Molina when he was head of the Las Vegas, Nev. jail system. The other, Ned McCormick, spent 23 years in the Connecticut jails.

Manhattan Federal Judge Laura Taylor Swain will preside over Thursday's hearing in the Nunez class action case in an atmosphere where the battle lines over the management of the city jails are as hardened as the trenches in Ukraine.

The plaintiffs — including the Legal Aid Society and detainee advocates — [argue the jails remain in crisis, beset with violence, excessive force by staff and a decaying disciplinary system.](#)

The Correction Department and the federal monitor, [which has filed two public reports this month](#), have taken the position that things are improving at Rikers, but that it remains a work in progress. Key in the hearing will be the view of the U.S. Attorney's office in Manhattan which has said little of substance since April 2022 when federal prosecutors [suggested they would back a takeover of the jails if things didn't improve.](#)

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